

FACT SHEET

Who Uses MEPS Data?



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AHRQ is the lead Federal agency charged with supporting research designed to improve the quality of health care, reduce its cost, address patient safety and medical errors, and broaden access to essential services. AHRQ sponsors and conducts research that provides evidence-based information on health care outcomes; quality; and cost, use, and access. The information helps health care decisionmakers—patients and clinicians, health system leaders, and policymakers—make more informed decisions and improve the quality of health care services.

Data and research from the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey (MEPS) provide nationally representative estimates of health care use, expenses, sources of payment, and insurance coverage for the U.S. population. Decisionmakers at all levels of the government and in the private sector use MEPS data on health care use and spending, insurance coverage, and accessibility of care for the U.S. population and subgroups of policy interest. Researchers in government, the health care industry, think tanks, advocacy groups, and universities use MEPS data for policy-related and behavioral research on the determinants of health care use, spending, and insurance coverage.

Federal Government

- In 2001, the General Accounting Office used MEPS data for a report on small employers and the challenges they face providing health insurance to their workers.
- The Congressional Budget Office uses MEPS data to examine State health insurance coverage issues.
- A White House report on prescription drug coverage for the elderly used MEPS data on prescribed medicines.

- The Department of Health and Human Services, Congressional Budget Office, and Department of the Treasury have used MEPS data for estimates of private nongroup health insurance coverage premiums.
- The Bureau of Economic Analysis uses MEPS data in the calculation of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).
- The Council of Economic Advisors has used MEPS data to examine the distribution of health care expenditures and per capita expenditures for the Nation.

State Government

- State governments are using data on health insurance from the MEPS Insurance Component to study ways of expanding insurance coverage by coordinating public subsidies with private job-based coverage. Some of these studies are funded by the Health Resources and Services Administration. In 2001, both Wisconsin and Arkansas paid to have a larger part of their population sampled in order to improve estimates for use by the State government.



U.S. Department of Health
and Human Services
Public Health Service



- In preparing reports on health insurance coverage at the State level, New Jersey and Colorado relied on MEPS Insurance Component data.

Private Sector

- The National Research Council used data from MEPS in its evaluation of the State Children's Health Insurance Program.
- *USA Today* used MEPS data in an article suggesting that data on the number of uninsured should be based on the number of Americans who have any gap in their coverage over the course of a year.
- The Institute of Medicine used MEPS data to help formulate recommendations in their 2001 Report *Crossing the Quality Chasm: A New Health System for the 21st Century*.

University

- Economist Frank Lichtenberg of Columbia University used MEPS data in an article in the September/October 2001 issue of *Health Affairs*: "Are the Benefits of Newer Drugs Worth Their Costs?

Evidence From the 1996 MEPS." This article has been widely cited in discussions of the cost of newer drugs. Since publication of the original article, Lichtenberg has revised the paper using MEPS data from 1998.

- Benjamin Druss, of Yale, and colleagues from other universities estimated the costs of the most expensive medical conditions in the United States using MEPS data. His article, "The Most Expensive Medical Conditions in America," is published in the July/August 2002 issue of *Health Affairs*.

For More Information:

For more information on MEPS, e-mail mepspd@ahrq.gov or visit the MEPS Web site at www.meps.ahrq.gov.



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